

PORTLAND OBSERVER (OR)
25 September 1980

Activist charges CIA connection

By Nyewusi Askari

(The following is an interview with Laura Brown, who spent three months in Iran, including three weeks in an Iranian jail.)

Observer: How and why did you become personally involved with the Iran situation?

Brown: I got involved with the Iran situation last November, when Iran took the hostages and kicked the U.S. out. There was a tremendous amount of racist hysterical war budding coming out of the American press about Iran. It brought many people forward to find out what was really happening with the Iranian revolution. I took a great chance as an American representative going to Iran to support the revolution and find out about it.

Observer: What were those first days like?

Brown: Well, they were pretty confusing. I went to the U.S. Embassy, a 27-acre compound that the Iranians view as an symbol of the past 27 years of U.S. domination of Iran. Once inside, it was like walking through a science fiction story. There was sophisticated communications equipment with direct link-ups to U.S. satellites, computers, code room and vaults full of CIA documents. In other words, the Iranians students holding the hostages gave me a first hand account of information that had been denied the Western press.

For example, there are Chinese American CIA agents operating in Iran, disguised as Chinese from the Mainland. They have Chinese passports, identifications, the whole works, yet these are people from places like Washington, D.C., California and other cities in America. The Iranians are very aware of this "Chinese connection".

Observer: What were the reactions of the Iranian government to your presence in Iran?

Brown: Very supportive. I was able to personally meet with several high Iranian officials within the Iranian government. For example, I was given an exclusive interview with Bani Sadr, a meeting with Sanjabi, foreign advisor to Bani Sadr and others.

Observer: How did your arrest come about and why?

Brown: I visited Kurdistan, which is the storm center of the revolution. While there, I became involved with the people and everyday was a whirlwind of non-stop political discussion and activity. I talked with Peshmergas which means literally, "those ready to die for their freedom", who were the front line fighters in this war. Upon leaving Kurdistan, I was arrested by trained Savak agents and sent to prison for being in Kurdistan and for allegedly being a U.S. spy. I was really caught up in a complicated power struggle in Iran and arrested by forces with close relations with the U.S. government as a means to end my visit.

Observer: What are the Iranians feeling toward the American hostages?

Brown: The Iranians pretty much know that not all the 50 hostages are spies. They know which ones are big spies and which ones aren't.

Observer: When do you think the hostage crisis will be resolved?

Brown: I don't see how the hostage crisis will be resolved until the international crisis is resolved. Many people talk about the hostages, but what they're talking about is U.S. imperialism. One thing the Iranians said was, hey look, we've never had anything but

good feelings toward the American people. They now have a sense of disappointment. The media in the U.S. is unbelievable in coming out with their racist nonsense about Iran.

Observer: What was the Iranian reaction to the U.S. Abortive rescue attempt?

Brown: Very interesting. The first reaction was, "We don't know if the fighting is to take place in the morning or the afternoon. The failed rescue attempt was first announced through use of a warning siren, which is normally used to signal war. When the Iranians heard the siren, they prepared themselves for war. There was no doubt on the part of the Iranians, that if the U. S. so much as took one step into Tehran, a full-scale war would have taken place.

Observer: Do you think the people of Iran are moving in the right direction, from your viewpoint as an observer?

Brown: Yes. I don't think they were doing that before. At this moment, the reactionary right, which is supported by the U.S. is defaulting power. Its a very big contradiction for the U.S. because they deny it. The fact that you hear of men being shot, of women being put in prison...you hear these things and don't realize that the people who are responsible, are U.S. backed. These are the people who wanted to bring the Shah back or put in a Shah like regime.

The revolution in Iran is whole. The people are extremely political minded. They see themselves as part of a whole world process whereby people are going to rise up to throw off the bonds of oppression.

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